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ABSTRACT

This teaching guide provides information to help junior high school art teachers develop and implement programs based on African art. Objectives are to help students appreciate various types of African art, understand the relationship of African art to European art, and produce Adinkra cloth (a colorful cloth printed with personal symbols and geometric shapes). The guide was developed at an interdisciplinary summer workshop for teachers on African curriculum development. It is intended as the basis of a two-week minicourse. Activities are presented in a daily outline format. Students are involved in a variety of activities including pre- and posttests, viewing and analyzing slides and films, listening to and discussing lectures on the history of African art, building and enhancing their vocabulary, learning about the traditions involved in making Adinkra cloth, designing Adinkra symbols, and developing printing skills. For each day's activities, information is presented on concepts, basic skills, implementation, materials, and evaluation. A bibliography is included to direct the teachers' attention to recent works on African art, culture, printmaking, and decorative arts. (DB)

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# "AFRICAN ART: ADINKRA CLOTH"

An Instructional Unit for Seventh-Ninth Grade Art

by

Patricia Baker

West Junior High School

Columbia, Missouri

This teaching unit on Africa was developed as part of an interdisciplinary workshop project in African curriculum development held on the University of Illinois' Urbana-Champaign campus in the summer of 1979. The workshop project, which was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, was carried out from 1977-80 and was integrated into an on-going program of outreach services offered to teachers nationwide. For further information on teaching aids available through outreach services, contact:

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SP 012 695

## 1. Preface Statement

Students today need to learn about as many different cultures as possible. Through this exposure, they can have a better understanding of their world and themselves. By better understanding themselves, they can come to grips with their biases and prejudices. In return, by taking a closer look at themselves, they can strengthen their own self-image.

Art is one aspect of culture that many times is overlooked. By exploring African cultures through art we may destroy many of the barriers and misunderstandings that exist today.

Students at my school take world cultures on the seventh grade level. In this subject Africa is taught. In the future we hope to develop a relationship between what is taught in art and world cultures. Meanwhile, African art will be taught on all three levels in our art department.

## 2. Grade Level and Course

Arts and Crafts I: 7th-9th grade

Two week unit

## 3. Instructional Objectives

### 3.1 Concepts

1. Many stereotypes exist about Africa.
2. Africa has diversity.
3. African art has a long and rich history behind it.
4. Art plays an important part in the daily lives of Africans.
5. The Ashanti people have a rich tradition in African art.
6. African art has influenced many European artists.
7. Adinkra cloth has a long line of tradition and history behind it.
8. Printmaking has many advantages as an art form.
9. The visual arts have meaning behind them, besides just appeal to the eye.

### 3.2 Basis Skills

The students are:

1. To view and interpret audiovisual aids.
2. To identify their own stereotypes.
3. To avoid "loaded" words.
4. To build vocabulary skills.
5. To improve reading comprehension.
6. To strengthen writing skills.
7. To develop an appreciation for African art.

8. To design a simple shape and give it meaning.
9. To develop the skill of carving and printing.

4. Topical Outline of the Concent

I. Introduction to Africa (a global view)

A. Pre-test/Awareness of stereotypes

B. General Information about Africa

1. Africa is a continent
2. Climate
3. Urban/Rural
4. Diversity

C. Oral Discussion

II. Art

A. African Art (a short art history lecture)

B. Ashanti Art

III. Adinkra Cloth

A. Vocabulary words

B. A reading on Adinkra Cloth

C. Worksheet

IV. Printmaking and Making an Adinkra Cloth

A. The advantages of printmaking as an art form

B. How to make Adinkra cloth

V. Lab

VI. Post-test

5. Material to achieve instructional objectives.

a. Films:

Arts and Crafts in West Africa. j-h 11 min., color: $6.45
Pictures the ancient arts and crafts which are still practiced today by highly skilled artisans in West African villages.

African Craftsmen: The Ashanti. i-j-h, 11 min., color: $6.65
The Ashanti of West Africa are skilled in various arts, including clothprinting , weaving and woodcarving.

b. a map of Africa

c. examples of Adinkra cloth and symbols

d. examples of pattern, texture, shape, geometric and organic shape and positive and negative shape

e. a reading on Adinkra cloth

f. slides (all reproduced from slide sets owned by the African Studies Program, University of Illinois)

"Ecology"
No 2: Village, wet tropics
No 3: Desert
No 8: Tropical Rain Forest
No 16: Thornbush savannah

"Sierra Leone Rice Farming"
No 18: Rice fields
No 19: Grow rice near field house of Teme family

"Contemporary Artists"
No 4: Skunder: Substance & Spirit
No 7: E. O. Darty
No 12: Ben Enwonwo
No 11: " " "
No 24: G. O. Taiaki
No 27: Solom Evangboje

"West African Dress"
No 14: Adinkra cloth, Ghana
No 15: Adinkra cloth and stamp
No 16: Adinkra design close-up
No 17: Adinkra cloth
No 18: Adinkra wrapper, Ghana

"Urban Africa"
No 4: Ghana
No 7: Market
No 22: Ivory Coast
No 33: Cape Town

Art History Slides,
No 2-3: Nok
No 7,9,10: Ife
No 16,17,19,21,22: Benin
No 29,30,31: Dogon
No 34: Bambara, Mali
No 39: Senufro/fireater
No 42: Baga
No 45-46: Baule
No 52: Shango Yoruba
No 58: Ekio mask
No 60,61,62,64: Cameroon
No 71: Bakota
No 49: Ashanti Doll
No 48: Ashanti Chief Stool

g. Teacher's bibliography

Bascom, William. African Art in Cultural Perspective. New York: Norton, 1973.
A catalogue of the major art-producing societies.

Bohannan, Paul and Curtin, Philip. Africa and Africans. New York: The Natural History Press, 1971.

Chase, Judith Wragg. Afro-American Arts and Crafts. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1971.
This book gives a much needed view of Afro-American art and Crafts.

D'Amato, Janet and Alex. African Crafts for You to Make. New York: Messner, 1969.
Directions for making clothing, jewelry, musical instruments, household and ritual objects from easily obtainable materials. Drawn illustration of the art objects.

Eyo, Ekpo. Two Thousand Years/Nigerian Art. Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Department of Antiquities, 1977.
This book is a collection of pictures of Nigerian art and a description with each plate.

Glubock, Shirley. The Art of Africa. New York: Harper, 1965.
Photographs of well-known types of African art removed their cultural contexts; accompanied by brief descriptions.

Jefferson, Louise E. The Decorative Arts of Africa. New York: Viking Press, 1973. $6.45
This is an invaluable handbook for all who are interested in the riches and diversity of African culture, as well as for anyone concerned with importance of effective design.

Kent, Kate. West African Cloth. Denver: Denver Museum of Natural History 1971.

Kerina, Jane. African Crafts. New York: Lion, 1970. Directions for making replicas of silver jewelry, carved calabashes, decorated objects of wood and leather, textile patterns and dyes. Drawn illustrations of art objects and design patterns.

Murphy, E. Jefferson and Klein, Harry. Teaching Africa. New York: Citation, 1973.
A handbook for teacher and curriculum planner.

Mazonowicz, Douglas. "Prehistoric Rock Painting at Tassili," African Arts, Vol. 2, 1968-1969.

Price, Christine. Made in West Africa. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1975.
A broad survey of the arts; primarily a book of photos of art objects being used and made, as well as photos of objects removed from their African contexts. A few facts are provided on each of the arts.

Wahlman, Maude, Contemporary African Arts. Berkeley, California: 1974.
A survey of art in the context in which it is used in Africa which includes historical information and many illustrations.

h. Students' bibliography

D'Amato, Janet and Alex. African Crafts for You to Make. New York: Messner, 1969.
Directions for making clothing, jewelry, musical inatruments, household and ritual objects from easily obtainable materials. Drawn illustrations of the art objects.

Kerina, Jane. African Crafts. New York: Lion, 1970.
Directions for making replicas of silver jewelry, carved calabashes, decorated objects of wood and leather, textile patterns and dyes. Drawn illustrations of art objects and design patterns.

Marshall, Anthony D. Africa's Living Arts. New York: Watts, 1970.
Broad survey and discussion of art illustrated with photos many of which show art in its contexts or use.

Williams. Geoffrey. African Designs from Traditional Sources. New York: Dover Publication, Inc., 1971.
This book brings together an unusually varied of selection of African designs which will find many uses in advertising and in the creation of book designs, bookplate, labels, and patterns for textiles and wallpaper.

6. Activities

a. Make an Adinkra wall hanging for the school.

b. Each student will print an Adinkra symbol on a piece of cloth, so that the teacher will make a skirt from it.

c. Each student will print an Adinkra symbol on pieces of paper to used as stationery.

d. Vocabulary worksheet

e. Discussion questions

f. Pre-test and post-test

g. Reading assignment

## FIRST DAY

A. Objectives

Concepts

1. Many stereotypes exist about Africa.
   a. Africa is a country.
   b. Africa is all jungle.
   c. Africans are savages.
2. Africa has diversity.

Basic Skills

1. The students are to view audiovisual aids critically.
2. The students should avoid "loaded" words

B. Implementation

1. The students will be given a pre-test to draw attention to their stereotypes.
2. The students will be shown slides to show the diversity of Africa
3. Lecture: Africa
   A. Physical
      1. Africa is a continent.
      2. Africa is made up of many countries.
      3. Africa is over three times the size of the United States.
      4. Climate
         a. grassland
         b. tropical rain forest
         c. desert
   B. People
      1. many different ethnic groups and cultures
   C. Urban/rural
4. Questions for starting discussion.
   a. Have your impressions changed?
   b. If your impressions have not changed, why have they not?

Materials

1. Map of Africa
2. Pre-test
3. slides: on a separate page
   a. rice farming
   b. architecture
   c. urban/rural
   d. climate: tropical rain, desert and savannah

# AFRICA

Name_____

Date _____

Please complete the following statements:**

1. Africa is...

2. African people are...

3. When I hear the word Africa I think of...

4. Africans probably think Americans are...

5. Some things I know about Africa are...

6. I would like to go to Africa because...

7. I would not like to go to Africa because...

**From Africa Studies Handbook for Teacher, Part I., Department of International Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass. p. 14.

## SECOND DAY

A. Objectives

Concepts

1. African art has a long history behind it that is very rich.
2. Africa has diversity.
3. Art plays an important part in Africans' daily lives.
4. African art has influenced European artists.
5. The Ashanti people have played an important part in African art history

Basic Skills

The students are:

1. To observe and be more critical of A-V material.
2. To avoid "loaded" words.
3. To develop an appreciation for African art.

B. Implementation:

1. The student will observe slides.
2. A lecture will be given on a brief look at the history of African art.

Outline of lecture

African Art

I. Introduction
   - A. Purpose
     1. Household use
     2. Beauty
   - B. African masks and sculpture influenced
     1. Pablo Picasso, Matisse, Brancusi, Modigliani
     2. German and French artists about the time of world War I.
     3. Black American artists in the twentieth century

II. General look at African art
   - A. Ancient art
     1. Rock Paintings
        - a. Stone Age
        - b. Found all over Africa
     2. Egyptian art
     3. Little is known about ancient African art.
        - a. wood and metal decay quickly in the tropics
        - b. most archaeological remains were found accidentally

B. West Africa

1. Nok: c.950 B.C. - c.200 A.D.
   a. Nigeria
   b. very stylized
      1. naturalistic animals
      2. treatment of the eyes
      3. ring on the forehead
2. Ife: 10th century - 15th century (Nigeria)
   a. very realistic
   b. not seen by non-Africans until 1939; some believed that the Greeks had done them
3. Benin
   a. Nigeria
   b. Lived in the city of Benin
   c. Tamed leopards kept in the palaces
   d. Learned casting from Ife
   e. Lasted more than 5 centuries
   f. British captured the city in 1897 and took much of the art back to England
   g. Bronze and ivory became well known
   h. Slides
      (1) A hunter carrying home antelope, which he shot with his bow and arrow.
      (2) Ivory pendant mask is one of the finest carvings in the world.
      (3) Pillars and walls of the Benin palaces were decorated with bronze relief panels.

C. Art of Today
1. Dogon (Mali)
   a. art: very stylized
      (1) straight lips
      (2) short legs
      (3) elongated bodies
      (4) facial features enlarged
2. Ekoi
   a. grassland of Nigeria and Cameroon

b. The art's purpose
   (1) secret society
   (2) festivals and funerals

c. Masks
   (1) carved in wood
   (2) leather stretched over
   (3) men and woman represented
   (4) white face sign of death

3. Baga
   a. Guinea
   b. Purpose of the art
      (1) mask/secret society
      (2) slide: four feet high, body hidden by costume

4. Bambara
   a. Mali
   b. Chi Wara
      (1) worn at planting time
      (2) antelope, buck or doe

5. Ashanti
   a. Ghana
   b. art
      (1) doll
         (a) worn at waist
         (b) insures good looking children
         (c) round head: boy, square head: girl
      (2) stool
         (a) soul of the owner
         (b) carved from a single piece of wood
      (3) gold weights
         (a) used to carry on trade
         (b) different shapes: animals

III. Students will see the film "Art and Crafts in West Africa."

## THIRD DAY

A. Objectives

1. Concepts

   a. Adinkra cloth has a long line of tradition and history behind it.

   b. The Ashanti people have a rich tradition in African art.

2. Basis Skills

   The students are:

   a. To build vocabulary skills.
   words: pattern, texture, shape, Ashanti, Adinkra cloth, organic and geometric shape, positive and negative shape, badies and Akan people.

   b. To follow written instruction.

B. Implementation

1. Show the film "African Craftsmen: The Ashanti"

2. Explain the meaning for the following words:
   pattern, texture, shape, Ashanti, Adinkra cloth, organic and geometric shape, positive and negative shape, badies and Akan people.

3. Reinforce the meaning of the words by doing the worksheet.

   Worksheet is on the next page.

4. The students are to read the instructions and then follow them.

Materials to be used:

1. worksheet

2. audiovisual: examples of pattern, texture, shape, positive and negative shape, organic and geometric shape, Adinkra cloth.

VOCABULARY WORDS AFRICA NAME_____

Vocabulary Words for the African Unit: Adinkra cloth, badie, Ghana, Ashanti, Akan, shape, pattern, texture, positive and negative shapes, geometric and organic shapes.

Directions: The first number stands for the words (above the blanks) and the second number stands (the number after the colon) for the letter within the word. If the number stands alone, it stands for the letter in the alphabet.

For example:

Feels, rough, smooth

__F__1:2, _____2:3, _____2:1, _____1:3, _____3:5, _____3:5,
(first word. second letter)

__X__24 _____ (unscramble)
word

The first blank is 1:2. The one stands for the word, being the first in the row, feels and the two stands for the letter within the word, feels, being "E." The last blank, the number stands alone the letter is the 24th of the alphabet, "X".

1. Goodbye, cloth, Akan, funeral

_____3:2, _____9, _____4:5, _____ 3:1, _____3:4, _____4:

_____1 (_____)

2. dye, bark, Adinkra, stamp

_____3:2, _____3:3, _____2:1, _____ 2:2, _____1:3

(_____)

3. repeat, shape, organized

_____1:2, _____2:3, _____ 1:6, _____3:2, _____3:5,

_____2:4 (_____)

4. line enclosed, area

_____2:6 _____6, _____8, _____1:4, _____3:1

(_____)

5. shape, outside

_____1:3, _____2:5, _____1:5, _____2:7, _____7, _____2:3,
_____9, _____22, (_____)

6. shape, inside object

_____2:1, _____1:5, _____3:6, _____3:1, _____1:1,
_____1:4 _____2:4, _____22
(_____)

7. mathematical, shape

_____1:1, _____1:3, _____15, _____1:9, _____7, _____1:5,
_____2:5, _____1:10, _____18
(_____)

8 shape, free form, natural

_____3:2, _____7, _____9, _____1:3, _____2:2, _____4:1,
_____3 (_____)

9. Africa, country, western

_____1:1 _____7, _____2:4, _____1:6, _____8
(_____)

10. ethnic group, Ghana

_____1:5, _____1:3, _____3:4, _____3:3, _____1:2
_____3:5, _____19 (_____)

11. ethnic group Ashanti, Ghana

_____3:1 _____4:3, _____1:4, _____11
(_____)

## FOURTH DAY

A. Objectives

1. Concepts

   a. Adinkra cloth has a long line of tradition and history behind it.

   b. The Ashanti people have a rich tradition in African art.

2. Basic Skills

   The students are:

   a. To improve reading comprehension.

   b. To improve writing skills.

   c. To develop an appreciation of African art.

B. Implementation

1. reading/comprehension
2. problem solving

Sample questions to be put on the board.

1. Explain the original purpose of Adinkra cloth.
2. Explain how the Ashanti people came to have Adinkra cloth.
3. Explain the different steps in making the cloth.
4. Explain how the art of the Ashanti people plays an important part in their everyday lives.

Materials to be used:

1. blackboard
2. article; the next page

C. Activities for students

1. read the article
2. answer the questions

## ADINKRA: THE SAYING GOODBYE CLOTH

In Akan society funeral and memorial services are held to say goodbye to the dead. The custom is to wear a colorful printed cloth called adinkra cloth, that plays in important part in memory of the dead. The adinkra cloth is a very elegant style of dress and is now worn for very important occasions, as well as being an art form. Adinkra mean "saying goodbye to one another when parting." When worn for mourning, the cloth is covered with printed symbols, which express the wearer's feelings about the dead. Some of the symbols stand for a proverb or a poetic message. The Akan go to the market place to purchase a piece of adinkra cloth to express their feelings or they have one made especially for them.

Adinkra cloth is made in a village, where all they do is make this cloth. The people learn one part of the process of producing the cloth. One man cuts the gourds, places sticks into them and binds them to use as a handle for stamping. Another man prepares the dyes from the bark of the tree called badies. The bark is boiled for a couple of days until it becomes thick. Children from the ages of eight to fifteen sew the strips of cloth together and then hem the whole piece. It usually takes a boy or girl five days to sew a whole strip. The adinkra printer lays the cloth on a clean, flat piece of ground and the corners are then secured to the ground. He takes the stamp, dips it into the dye, presses on the cloth and repeats until he has finished a row.

A printer uses usually six to eight symbols on a cloth. He gets the beautiful adinkra effect by repeating the symbols and alternating with geometric pattern in a square block or a long strip until the cloth is completely covered. It takes a year before the dye become fast in the cloth before it can be washed. Women sell the adinkra cloth in the market. A finished cloth with white background is a man's cloth and a color background is a women's cloth. Today adinkra cloths are worn in Ghana on many occasions by members of many different ethnic groups.

The Ashanti tradition of stamping designs on was not learned until the 19th century. It is named for the King of Gyaman (now the Ivory Coast), Adinkra, who wore the cloth into battle against the Ashanti. Adinkra was killed and his son was taken prisoner. Apau, his son, in return for his life, revealed the secrets of the cloth. The village of Asokwa was named the Ashanti king's official printing center and it still remains the center today. The craft has been carried to other towns.

## FIFTH DAY

A. Objectives

1. Concepts

a. The visual arts have meaning besides just appeal to the eye.

b. Art plays an important part in African's daily lives.

c. Adinkra cloth has a long line of tradition in African art.

d. Printmaking has many advantages as an art form.

2. Basis Skills

The student are:

a. To follow oral and written instructions.

b. To develop the skills of printing and carving.

c. To design a simple shape and give it meaning

B. Implementation:

1. Lecture and demonstration/problem solving and lab

a. Explain the art of printmaking and the advantages

- a cheaper form of art, making it more affordable
- purpose/useful

b. Explanation of making the Adinkra cloth
- designing the shape
- cutting the linoleum
- printing: cloth and the stationery

c. Requirements for project: on the board and teacher's journal
- design an Adinkra symbol
- give the shape meaning
- print the cloth for the wall hanging, teacher's skirt, and eight pieces of stationery
- sign name correctly on the print
- use three colors for the stationery
- neatly printed
- evenly printed

Materials to be used:

1. sketch pad
2. linoleum
3. gouges
4. holders

5. Examples of an Adinkra cloth and slides

Sixth Day: continuation of the fifth day

Lab

## SIXTH DAY

A. Objectives

1. Concepts

   a. The visual arts have meaning besides just appeal to the eye.

   b. Printmaking has many advantages as an art form.

2. Basic Skills

   The students are:

   a. To follow oral instructions.

   b. To develop skills for printing.

   c. To sign a print correctly.

B. Implementation:

1. demonstration

2. lab

Materials to be used:

1. brayer
2. textile ink
3. glass for printing
4. paper
5. cloth
6. spoons
7. newspaper
8. examples: stationery, Adinkra cloth (wall hanging) and skirt

C. Activities:

1. printing: stationery, Adinkra cloth and skirt

D. Evaluation:

1. The students will be evaluated on how well they filled their requirements of the project.

## SEVENTH DAY

A. Objectives

Concepts

1. Many stereotypes exist about Africa.

2. Basic Skills

   The students are:

   1. To avoid "loaded" words.

B. Implementation: Post-test and discussion

1. The student will take the same test as the first day. When finished, they will compare the answers they originally wrote with their answers at the end of their project.